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ABSTRACT

National tensions are increasing over religious freedom, education, and the relation of government and its taxing power to religious institutions. Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, sectarian special interests and others have stepped up their efforts to compel all citizens to contribute involuntarily through taxes to the support of nonpublic schools, the overwhelming majority of which are religious institutions. Unfortunately, the public is largely uninformed on this issue even though it has consistently defeated proposals in statewide referendums to provide tax aid to nonpublic schools. The parochiaid controversy in the United States and other countries has a long history. It is this book's thesis that the controversy is a clash between those who value religious freedom, pluralism, democratic public education, and an open society and those who would revive sectarian antagonisms and replace democratic education with special-interest indoctrination; moreover, that the outcome of the parochiaid battles of the 1990s will determine the future of U.S. society and its educational system. Chapter topics include background to the dispute, the nature of church schools, enrollment in nonpublic schools, parochiaid in the states, parochiaid referenda, federal issues, parochiaid and the courts, and the pros and cons of parochiaid. An appendix including supplementary tables as well as an index are included. (JPT)

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